

Dates to Remember

- Maryland Rural Water Association, April 27-30, Ocean City.
- Maryland Municipal League Convention, June 23-26, Ocean City.
- Maryland Association of Counties, Aug. 14-17, Ocean City
- National Rural Development Partnership Leadership Conference, Aug. 23-28, French Lick, Indiana

FORVM FOR RURAL MARYLAND

First Quarter 2002
Volume 2, Issue 1

Maryland's Rural Development Council

Are we ready? Statewide survey will show gaps in Maryland's e-readiness



Government officials, business leaders and community advocates throughout the state will spend the next month digesting both the statewide and regional results of the first comprehensive study of Maryland's information technology readiness.

The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), along with ten corporate partners, conducted an 18-month, \$300,00 study of businesses and households across the state to identify those areas that need additional telecom infrastructure. Originally focused on underserved, primarily rural communities, the assessment was later expanded to include the entire state.

Not surprising, rural areas of the state had lower internet connection speeds, with slow downs during peak

residential use hours. These areas also have less load balancing investments and few Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to choose from.

TEDCO and the FORVM FOR RURAL MARYLAND, along with the state's four regional economic development councils, will hold meetings through the state during April to bring regional data to local leaders. (See schedule at right.)

The survey included an assessment of the state's network infrastructure, usage patterns of both businesses and households, real-time testing of ISPs, and community planning.

The goal of the eReadiness-survey is to find solutions that will bridge the digital divide by providing quality data to decision-makers and bringing together public and private interests to build a lasting "network of prosperity."

Join Us!

THE FORVM FOR RURAL MARYLAND, TEDCO & Regional Economic Development Councils invite you to hear the regional results of Maryland's E-Readiness Survey. Please call to confirm before attending.

**Southern Maryland Tri-County Council, April 26, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. College of Southern Maryland, LaPlata Campus
Call: 301-870-2520**

**Lower-Shore Regional Council
May 8 in Snow Hill.
Call: (410) 632-3300**

**Mid-Shore Regional Council
May 13, at Chesapeake College
Call: 410-770-6835**

Western Maryland Tri-County Council. Call: 301-777-2158

**Save
the
date!**

**The 2002 Maryland Rural Summit
November 14 & 15, 2002, Annapolis**

Registration Information will be available on our website soon:

www.ruralforvm.state.md.us

N e w s l e t t e r

"Maryland must continue to make progressive and responsible investments to address these concerns and to continue to make Maryland an even greater place to live, work, and raise a family."

See the complete report, at:
[www.dbm.state.md.us/html/
mdmfr.pdf](http://www.dbm.state.md.us/html/mdmfr.pdf)

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Moving Maryland Forward: 2002 and Beyond

A strategic direction for Maryland State Government

Governor Parris Glendening and Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend recently released *Moving Maryland Forward: 2002 and Beyond*, a report which states a vision and sets goals for the future of Maryland. It provides citizens and policy makers measures of the State's performance in achieving its goals. The report addresses strategic planning efforts in the following key performance areas:

- Protection of the environment and Smart Growth;
- Education;
- Economic development and growth;
- Safe communities;
- Child and family well being; and
- Economically independent families and stable families and communities.

The plan addresses these priorities at a statewide level, establishes three key statewide goals, and identifies how progress toward achieving those goals is measured. It also informs citizens about the State's performance in achieving its mission and vision. This achievement will require joint efforts by all levels of government, the private sector, and Maryland citizens themselves.

Moving Maryland Forward is the product of Maryland's Managing for Results strategic planning process, in which State agencies develop results-oriented strategic plans that support State priorities that are based on citizens' needs. They also develop measures of program success in achieving program results. The goals in this plan derive from the planning efforts of Maryland State agencies.

Maryland's Vision:

Maryland - a Great Place to Live and Work, and
Raise a Family.

Maryland's Goals:

Maryland Citizens Living in a Healthy Environment
Protected by Well-Managed Growth

Three statewide goals support Maryland's vision for a vital and prosperous state

GOAL 1: Maryland citizens living in a healthy environment protected by well-managed growth. Goal 1 addresses these key performance areas:

- *Environmental Protection* – sustaining a clean and healthy environment.
- *Smart Growth* – preserving Maryland's environmental quality by encouraging growth in areas best equipped to handle growth.

GOAL 2: Maryland citizens working in quality jobs. Goal 2 addresses these key performance areas:

- *Education* – strengthening the quality and delivery of education for every child to prepare each of them to work as productive citizens.
- *Economic Development and Growth* – maintaining a robust economy and improving Maryland's economic competitiveness.

GOAL 3: Maryland citizens living and raising families in safe, caring and engaged communities. Goal 3 addresses

these key performance areas:

- *Public Safety* – implementing immediate and long-term measures to proactively reduce crime and enhance citizen safety.
- *Child and Family Well Being* – fostering a social environment that results in healthy children, families, and adolescents, and allows citizens to develop to their fullest potential and contribute to the growth of their communities.

These three goals guide statewide efforts to achieve Maryland's vision. They are interconnected, and achievement of each is highly dependent on achievement of each of the others. To continually check our progress toward achieving these goals, State agencies collect performance data, analyze trends, integrate performance measures into resource allocation decisions, and identify innovative and realistic ways to reach desired outcomes. In short – the State is committed to achieving results for its citizens. Achieving these goals supports the State's efforts to achieve *overall excellence in government*. The State continues to strive to make Maryland government more effective, efficient and compassionate.



**A One-Year Report
on USDA-Rural
Development from
Marlene B. Elliott,
State Director, MD/DE**

FORVM FOR RURAL MARYLAND

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www.ruralforvm.state.md.us

*Maryland's Rural communities
received more than \$124 million
in federal money last fiscal year.*

*These dollars translate into
improving the lives of more than
30,000 Marylanders.*

Working to keep Rural America strong, prosperous

This month I am honored to celebrate one year of service as the Maryland/Delaware Director for USDA Rural Development which is just one of the many agencies under the USDA umbrella.

You may be surprised to know that we actually handle very few production agriculture programs but are responsible for many different initiatives that are designed to assist and strengthen the quality of life in Rural America. Many people ask why is Rural Development an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture? The answer is that our focus is on serving Rural America. Through our programs, communication, understanding, and hard work, we can help people better their lives. Our commitment to this effort comes from the top – from President George W. Bush, Secretary Ann M. Veneman, and all of USDA.

This past year, the Bush Administration released their Food and Agricultural Policy Report called "Taking Stock for the New Century". In its summary, it says the following:

"Farming no longer anchors most rural economies as it did through the mid 20th century. Seven out of eight rural counties are now dominated by varying mixes of manufacturing, services, and other nonfarming activities. ...A prosperous rural America depends upon many of the same things as urban areas – good paying jobs; access to critical services such as education, health care, technology, transportation, and communication; strong and safe communities, and a sustainable natural environment."

USDA Rural Development programs are designed for these purposes.

So, what is rural? For most of our programs, rural is defined as an area

whose population is 10,000 residents or less. Why a separate agency? If these programs were not targeted for rural areas, it is safe to say that these dollars would likely be spent in more urban, populated areas.

Rural communities in Maryland received over \$124 million in federal money last fiscal year. These dollars directly translate into improving the lives of over 30,000 Maryland residents. More than \$89 million of that investment comes in the form of housing opportunities to help people buy, build, rent or repair decent housing. Last year in Maryland, with the assistance of Rural Development programs, over 2,300 families purchased homes making it possible for people to achieve the American dream of homeownership. The pride in property and community that comes with that ownership is an important step in building and sustaining rural communities. Home ownership builds economic stability, and over the long term, creates equity to finance education for our children and new, emerging businesses.

More than \$34.7 million was aimed at improving the economic and environmental climate of rural communities and providing essential services like fire protection, health care, education and safe drinking water. Last year Rural Development programs helped create or save over 800 jobs in Maryland making it possible for small towns to become full partners in economic recovery and in the American economy. Each year, many municipalities rely on assistance through Rural Development's – Rural Utilities Service programs that are designed to improve public health, safety, and overall quality of life. The utility programs help bring safe drinking water and sanitary,

environmentally sound waste disposal facilities to rural Americans in greatest need. Safe, clean drinking water and sanitary wastewater facilities are an investment in improving basic public health, enhancing fire protection, attracting new homes and businesses, and conserving natural resources like the Chesapeake Bay. Through these kinds of efforts we can help make Rural America an attractive place for economic and social development and through these efforts, we will continue to make a very real and very positive impact on people's lives.

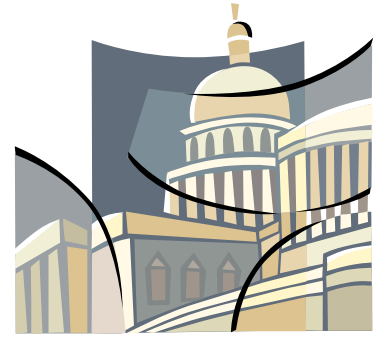
Without a doubt this agency is making great strides in improving the well being of residents living in rural areas. Let me assure you that as the director I realize that this money does not come from Washington. Initially, this money comes from you and me – the taxpayer. One of the goals outlined by the Bush administration to our agency is that the assistance provided to Rural Americans is a good, sound investment for the government and for the U.S. taxpayers. Our programs have enjoyed great success and are needed to overcome the financial barriers of obtaining credit in Rural America, but we have been charged with the task of using the dollars wisely for the betterment of Rural America and to maintain the confidence of you, the taxpayer.

I am excited to serve the Bush administration at an agency that does so much to help individuals and communities in rural areas. I look forward to doing all that I can to continue to improve the lives of our friends and neighbors in rural Maryland and Delaware.

For information on MD's Rural Development programs see: www.rurdev.usda.gov/md

The Maryland General Assembly faced a particularly difficult legislative session this year. Here are some highlights that affect rural communities.

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2002 Legislative Wrap Up

The State Budget dominated this year's session of the Maryland General Assembly as lawmakers combed through virtually every aspect of government, looking for \$450 million to cut from the Governor's proposed budget. At one point, state budget analysts even recommended abolishing The Forvm, which receives \$113,000 from the state; however, key legislative committees soundly rejected the idea. Despite the financial difficulties, most rural development programs fared well. Here are some of the legislative issues followed by THE FORVM.

About the Budget

MAE&RDAF funded for 2003

The General Assembly allocated \$347,000 to the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Program, which provides grants to rural-serving nonprofit organizations. The Governor had originally included \$422,000 -- the same amount as last year. THE FORVM was instrumental in establishing this fund and continues to help administer the selection process. The Board of Public Works approves all grants. (See page 8.)

MCM fully funded

The General Assembly provided full funding of \$180,000 for the Microenterprise Council of Maryland, which now receives an appropriation in the Department of Housing and Community Development budget. The MCM helps local governments and nonprofit organizations assist disadvantaged entrepreneurs.

FORVM thanks supporters

During the session, the Department of Legislative Services recommended abolishing THE FORVM FOR RURAL MARYLAND; however, the recommendation was strongly opposed by rural legislators and soundly rejected by both House and Senate subcommittees. A total of \$230,000 in State and Federal funds were

appropriated for FY 2003. We thank all of our members and friends who called to voice and write letters of support.

Rural Sewer Issues

Legislation helps small towns study wastewater problems

The General Assembly passed Wastewater Infrastructure Improvement legislation (SB643/HB1051) that requires the Maryland Department of the Environment to conduct Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) studies and utility rate studies for small and mid-size wastewater systems.

Specifically, the legislation requires the MDE to complete I&I studies with available information by FY04; three to six indepth I&I studies in selected communities by FY05; and a study of utility rates by FY06. Other legislation (HB 659) also passed that establishes an Inter-agency Wastewater Technical Assistance Committee.

The measure came about as a result of work done by the Forvm's Infrastructure Working Committee and the Governor's Task Force on Upgrading Sewage Systems. The General Assembly's Rural Caucus sponsored the legislation, and the Maryland Municipal League made this legislation a priority issue for the 2002 Session.

The lack of an adequate wastewater infrastructure in many smaller communities poses a serious challenge to the quality of life and undermines the State's Smart Growth objectives that seek to

channel economic development into areas where infrastructure is in place.

Rural-Based Business

New Seafood & Aquaculture Task Force created

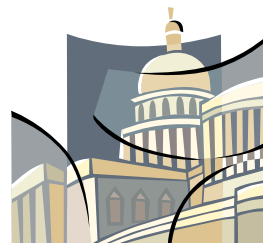
The General Assembly created a 15-member Task Force on Seafood and Aquaculture Industry (HB 662) to study the economic development of the seafood and aquaculture industries. The membership and scope of the task force will include two workgroups, one to study and develop methods of expanding markets for Maryland seafood and the second to study the economic viability and development of the aquaculture industry. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Business and Economic Development will provide staff for the task force. A final report will be due in 2004.

Resource-Based Industry Task Force extended a third year

The General Assembly extended the work of the Resource-Based Industry Task Force another 17 months and renamed it the Task Force on Resource Industry Business Development to show its new direction. (SB 735 / HB 849.) THE FORVM endorsed this legislation and will continue to provide staff support to the task force along with the Department of Legislative Services.

The bill also expands the mem-

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Continued from previous page

bership of the task force, adding representatives from the state's four regional councils, agriculture economic specialists and the Maryland Waterman's Association among others. The Task Force was created in 2000 as a result of preliminary work done by THE FORVM's Working Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources. The task force is co-chaired by Senator Mac Middleton and Del. Charles McClenahan.

Joint Resolution encourages ethanol production

The House and Senate passed a joint resolution (SJ18/HJ33) that urges the Department of Business and Economic Development, the Department of the Environment, and the Department of Agriculture to develop a business plan for an ethanol industry in Maryland and report on the feasibility of developing an ethanol plant in the state. Ethanol, derived from corn or barley, has been an increasingly important fuel additive over the past 15 years. The fundamental role of fuel ethanol has been as a gasoline extender and octane enhancer. Ethanol has also been used as an oxygenate to reduce certain types of vehicle emissions.

LEAD Maryland:

Rural leaders sought

LEAD Maryland – a two-year leadership development program — works to develop leadership within the agricultural community, improve the public understanding of farming and farmers, and contribute to the success and profitability of farms. The program is designed for those who have careers or activities related to agriculture and rural communities. The two-year program includes eight 3-day seminars held around the state; a 4-day study tour to better understand policy and process in Washington, D.C.; and 10-14 days at an international location. Applications for the next LEAD Maryland class are due October 1, 2002. For more information, call Executive Director Susan Harrison at 410-827-8056.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Net.work.Maryland on hold

The General Assembly requested that the Department of Management and Budget put a temporary hold on Net.work.Maryland, the State's high-speed fiber optic telecommunications system intended to link public institutions throughout the state. Lawmakers expressed serious concern over the way the project, which has already spent \$19 million, has been evolving and whether it will be able to meet its original vision.

In addition, the Rural Caucus formed a Telecom Work Group, chaired by Delegate Mary Roe Walkup, which recently met with the State's new Chief Information Officer Linda Burek, who reported that her office is working to put an ISP connection in each of the state's four Local Access and Transport Areas (LATAs) by October 31. Ms. Burek also reported that she has hired a Project Manager to guide the project and is creating a Board of Directors, made up of key stakeholders, to be involved in all major project decisions as it moves forward.

Cecil County:

Kilby recognized

Gov. Parris Glendening recognized Phyllis Kilby -- a dairy farmer and member of the Cecil County Board of County Commissions (and FORVM Executive Board Member) -- as a Maryland "Smart Growth Champion." Commissioner Kilby was cited for her work to protect farmland, to broaden citizen involvement in local land use issues, and for her support of redevelopment within existing Cecil County communities. For more on Smart Growth Champions: www.smartgrowth.state.md.us

Rural America:

On the National Front

As this newsletter goes to the printer, a U.S. Senate-House Conference Committee is merging the National Rural Development Partnership Act into the "Farm Bill," an omnibus piece of legislation relating to the nation's agricultural and rural development policy that Congress must pass every five years. The NRDP provision reauthorizes the work of State Rural Development Councils, like THE FORVM, and establishes a new National Rural Development Coordinating Committee. When the Farm Bill is enacted, this action concerning the NRDP will conclude two years of hard work by rural leaders from around the country.

Thanks go to Maryland Senators Barbara Mikulski and Paul Sarbanes and Maryland Congressmen Roscoe Bartlett and Wayne Gilchrest who co-sponsored the freestanding NRDP Act in 2001.

McHenry elected Chair of PRA

FORVM Executive Director Stephen McHenry was recently elected chair of the Partners for Rural America, a non-profit, non-partisan organization that exists to support the efforts of state rural development councils, like THE FORVM. State rural development councils work to expand economic and social opportunities for America's rural communities and their residents, to promote equal treatment of rural America by government agencies and the private sector, and to provide a collective voice for rural America. McHenry has been active in the PRA since its founding in 1999.

Spotlight!

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Maryland Rural Health Association: Embarking on a new future

The Maryland Rural Health Association – which partners with the Forvm every year to host the annual Statewide Rural Summit — held a two-day Strategic Planning Retreat in Annapolis recently to begin outlining how it would approach the future and become the organization leaders throughout the State go to when addressing rural health issues.

With several new board members recently elected at its annual meeting, and with two grants from the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Fund, the MRHA Board spent two days going over their mission, policies and operating procedures, with plans to refine the organization from top to bottom.

Al Grant of the National Rural

Health Association in Tennessee facilitated the retreat. Grant, who works with rural health associations throughout the country, focused on the importance of recruiting members and then involving them in important activities.

“The issue is leadership,” he said. “If you bring the right leadership to the table, great things can happen.”

With a lot of round-robin brainstorming and information sharing, board members were able to begin envisioning ways to recreate the MRHA into a more effective and articulate body.

“The state looks at health as a welfare issue but it’s really an economic factor,” said MRHA Treasurer Barb Polack of Calvert Memorial Hospital. “It’s a huge and growing industry, and it’s usually the first or second biggest economic force in a rural area. We need to look at it as an economic issue as well.”

The MRHA was recently asked to consider creating a regional rural health association with their counterparts in New Jersey and Delaware so that these largely urban states could speak with a united voice for their rural citizens.

Grant said there is no cookie-cutter approach to state rural health associations and that despite some similarities, all are different.

“If you’ve seen one,” he said, “you’ve seen one.”

New Rural Health Care Plan Released

The second edition of the *State Rural Health Care Plan: Including the Rural Hospital Flexibility Program* was released by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Primary Care and Rural Health in January. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the current status and future challenges facing rural Maryland.

The report includes a Community Health Status Report for each rural county in Maryland. Each report includes demographic information, as well as statistics on the rates of selected diseases, causes of death, and health disparities.

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Join
Now!

MRHA Board Members

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- ◆ **Esther Rae Barr**, Maryland Academy of Family Physicians, 410.747.1980. Email: mdafp@charm.net
- ◆ **Patricia E. Boehm**, Department of Health & Mental Hygiene Office of Primary Care & Rural Health, 410.767.5590, Email: boehmp@dnhm.state.md.us
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- ◆ **Wayne Howard**, Choptank Community Health System, Email: whoward@dmv.com
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FORVM FOR RURAL MARYLAND

The Maryland Rural Summit is hosted by the FORVM, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Office of Primary Care & Rural Health, & the Maryland Rural Health Association

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2002 Nominations Open:

Rural Development & Health Care Awards

Individuals and organizations in rural communities will be recognized for their outstanding rural development efforts during the 2002 Rural Awards Dinner to be held November 14 in Annapolis. Awards are sponsored by THE FORVM FOR RURAL MARYLAND, the Maryland Rural Health Association and the Maryland DHMH Office of Primary Care and Rural Health. Award descriptions and criteria are listed below.

Nomination deadline is September 30, 2002. See our website for complete nomination details: www.ruralforvm.state.md.us

■ **Outstanding Rural Economic Development:** Program, project or organization that successfully attracts, retains or creates jobs in at least one rural county. Award criteria: Significance of jobs attracted, retained or created in relation to a community's economic development objectives; noteworthy, creative, or innovative techniques brought to bear on challenging economic development situations; and the use of partnerships for leveraged resources in achieving business development goals.

■ **Outstanding Rural Community Development:** Program, project or organization that substantially improves the quality of life in at least one rural community. Award criteria: dedication and creativity in providing community-oriented service(s), evidence of collaboration with relevant stakeholders to resolve social problem(s), and the use of partnerships or leveraged resources to realize community-achievement goals.

■ **Outstanding Legislator Award:** For outstanding leadership in promoting legislation to benefit rural communities. Award criteria: demonstrated wisdom and foresight in dealing with rural issues; and an understanding of and exemplary leadership in addressing rural needs.

■ **Outstanding Rural Health Program:** Promotes and provides effective community-oriented rural health care delivery and excels in service to rural people, directly or indirectly. Award criteria: quality of service, dedication and creativity in providing services to the community that leads to improved access to care, coordination of care, promotion of networking among rural providers, and promotion of interdisciplinary health care delivery.

■ **Outstanding Rural Health Achievement:** For leadership and noteworthy initiative in the development of community-oriented rural health care delivery. Award criteria: distinctive efforts to promote and/or improve rural health care, leadership, involvement in the community, and lasting contributions to health care.

■ **Outstanding Rural Health Practitioner:** Provides direct service and exhibits outstanding leadership in bringing and/or improving health services to rural populations. Award criteria: provision of outstanding care, collaboration and teamwork, involvement in the community, and lasting contribution to the rural health care system.

Rural Summit 2002: Call for Summit proposals, sponsors

The Rural Summit is the only time during the year when rural leaders in health care, and economic & community development meet to discuss common challenges.

Call for Workshop Proposals

Do you have a good idea for a workshop topic related to rural economic or community development or rural health care that could benefit leaders throughout the state? Let us know. Our planning committee will review each submittal.

Call for Sponsorships

If your organization would like to sponsor the Summit and let rural leaders know you care about improving the lives of 1.3 million Marylanders, consider the following:

All sponsors receive a 6-foot exhibit table; one Summit registration; and a listing in the Summit Sponsor Directory distributed to all attendees

Major Sponsor of \$1,000 or more: In addition to the above, your name and logo will be prominently displayed on the Rural Awards Dinner Program, as well as on all registration materials and Summit signage. You also get everything listed on the left.

Reception Sponsor of \$500: In addition to the above, your name will be prominently displayed on signage to be made especially for the reception as well as on all conference materials. You also get everything listed on the left.

Exhibit Sponsor of \$275: You get a 6-foot exhibit table and free registration to the Summit for one staff person. Your name will also be listed in a Sponsor directory that will be distributed to all attendees.

For the latest Summit Information, see: www.ruralforvm.state.md.us

Rural-serving organizations recently received nearly \$346,000 in grants from the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund, which the FORVM helps to administer with the Department of Business and Economic Development and others.

Rural-serving organizations awarded grants

Grants Administered by the Department of Agriculture: \$173,320

- Carroll Community College - Agriculture Advanced Technology Center.
- The Chesapeake Fields Institute.
- Future Harvest, Inc. - A Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture.
- Garrett Community College - Alternative Agriculture Advanced Technology Center.
- LEAD Maryland: Maryland's Ag Leadership Development Program.

■ Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc.

- Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts - Maryland Envirothon Program.

Grants Administered by the Department of Business and Economic Development: \$64,320

- The Maryland Rural Health Association.
- Salisbury University's BEACON Program (Business, Economic and Community Outreach Network).

Grants Administered by Department of Housing and Community Development: \$67,500

- Maryland Center for Community Development.
- Maryland Rural Development Corporation.

Grants administered by the Department of Natural Resources: \$41,000

- The Maryland Forests Association.
- Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council.



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